

Addressing Vermont Workforce Planning Model Steps I.A.: Strategic Direction Work Page

Best practices in workforce planning call upon each organization to conduct a strategic plan before engaging in the workforce planning process. This will give the organization clear guidance based on mission, vision, goals and strategies to succeed in achieving those goals. It makes it much easier to determine future staffing needs when the direction for the future is clearly defined.

Step I.A. of the Vermont Seven Step Workforce Planning Model asks the question, “Does your organization have a strategic plan?” If it does, this step then suggests a review of that plan to ensure the mission, vision, goals and objectives are up-to-date. If the strategic plan is not current, or if the organization is without a strategic plan, the Model recommends developing one before embarking on workforce planning.

That said, there are times when the need is for immediate workforce planning is critical. In such a case, the following questions may help to define the context for the workforce planning effort in the absence of a current strategic plan.

This work page is designed for all users – those who have current effective strategic plans, those who have gone through strategic planning, but not recently, and those without strategic plans.

1. If a strategic plan is in place, use these questions to help focus the team’s thoughts before proceeding into data collection and analysis.
2. If a strategic plan is not current or does not exist, and the organization will not be conducting a strategic planning process prior to workforce planning, then use these questions to clarify the strategic circumstances that will influence future direction.
3. If using these questions in lieu of a strategic plan, please examine each question thoroughly, documenting the responses well. Also, consider this a stop-gap measure and begin a strategic planning process as soon as possible.

Workforce Planning may be conducted at the division, department, agency or state-wide level. For simplicity, this work page will use the term “department.”

1. In what direction is the department going?
2. How is the department changing? How is its culture changing?
3. What significant issues and challenges is the department facing that will affect its mission/vision, values, goals, and strategies?

4. What is the department's organizational structure likely to look like in 3 to 5 years? How will the structure evolve to that new structure from its current state? What factors will influence the change?
5. What are customers' expectations? How are they changing?
6. What technological changes are likely, and how might they change the way the department works?
7. What (if anything) is the state legislature considering that might impact the department?
8. What federal changes are being considered that may affect the department's structure or functions?
9. What changes are likely to arise in union contract negotiations that may affect the department's structure or functions?
10. How are employee expectations changing?
11. What are the employment trends at the state and national level?